**The Declaration of Independence**

**9 Key Concepts Everyone Should Know**

**Order of the Declaration of Independence**

1. The purpose of the government is to protect our basic rights.
2. Wrongs/grievances done by the king.
3. Colonies Declare Independence

**Unalienable rights:** God given rights that can’t be taken away.

**I. 3 broad categories of the Declaration of Independence**

1. Understanding the basic structure
2. Understanding the 7 component parts
3. Understanding that the Declaration and the US Constitution are designed to work together

**II. Basic Structure**

1. Total length is just under 1400 words.
2. About 400 words spell out the essence of the principles and beliefs upon which the United States was founded
3. These 400 key words are split about equally between the opening and closing.
4. The other 1000 words appear in the middle of the Declaration and outline over 25 abuses of King George III over a 10 year period.

**III. 7 Component Parts**

**4 Component Parts are included in the introductory remarks.**

1. **Reason for the Declaration**
2. Opening Sentence:

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

1. **The Self-Evident Truths (most important)**
2. Second Sentence:

WE hold these *Truths to be self-evident*,

* That *all men are created equal*,
* That they are *endowed by their Creator* with certain *unalienable Rights*,
* That among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

Happiness meant that the individual would have the freedom to use *their time, talent and resources to pursue the directions* in life that they believed would bring them the *most satisfaction and benefit their family, friends, fellow man and future generations the most.*

1. **The purpose of Government**
2. Third Sentence:

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

* The reason for the Governments existence is to secure these rights

1. **Reasons for altering or abolishing a form of Government**
2. Fourth Sentence

That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, *that is preserving the self evident truths that they already named*, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

**Re-cap: Four huge Concepts in the first 4 Sentences**

* Reason
* Self-evident truths
* Purpose of Government
* Abolishment of Government

**Body of the Declaration of Independence (Middle)**

1. **The List of Grievances against King George III – over 1000 words**
2. Over 25 abuses of King George III over a 10 year period and provide ample evidence that the Declaration was justified.
3. The abuses included fall into the following categories:
4. Unfair taxation,
5. Cutting off trade
6. Abolishing good and helpful laws,
7. Making arbitrary laws himself,
8. Creating new government departments with officials that harass the people,
9. Depriving colonists of trial by jury,
10. Protecting his own officials that were murderers,
11. Attempting to establish military rule,
12. Hiring mercenaries to harass and kill colonists,
13. Capturing and forcing colonists to fight against their fellow colonists or be killed,
14. Fostering domestic uprisings in the colonies,
15. Disallowing or not hearing any appeals for justice.

**The Declaration Statement:**

WE, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS. Assembled, appealing to the *Supreme Judge of the World* for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name and, by the authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, *That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES*

1. **Rights of these United “Sovereign” States include:**
2. And that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved
3. And that as Free and Independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude, peace, contract alliances, and establish commerce (declaring for separate states, not a global state)
4. And to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.
5. **The Pledges**
6. **The Last Sentence**
7. A Pledge to God and seeking His protection: And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the *Protection of Divine Providence*,
8. A Pledge to Each Other: We mutually pledge to each other *our Lives, or Fortunes, and our sacred Honor*

**In July and August of 1776 The Signing of the Declaration took place**

**July 4th John Hancock signed it, printed copy was drawn up, announced to the people, and on August 2nd the rest of the 56 signers signed the Declaration of Independence to make it official.**

**The Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution work together**